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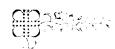
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### POPERY:

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## ALLIANCE WITH PAGANISM.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

BY SENECA W. WINTER, OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



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### INTRODUCTION.

FEW persons who have travelled in popish lands can have failed to notice, the almost endless ceremonies adopted by the different churches in connexion with the apostate and idolatrous Church of Rome: indeed, her idolatry, and numerous vain ceremonies, at once identify her with Pagan Rome, and prove that she has amalgamated the religion of Christianity with that of Paganism, in order the more effectually to impose upon the ignorant and credulous, for the purpose of aggrandizing to herself greater worldly riches and honours.

It is impossible to convey anything like an adequate idea of what popery is in all its bearings, in countries, uninfluenced by 4

the eye of the protestant, or the protestant's power; and I feel persuaded that were I to detail the one half of what came under my own immediate observation during a three years' residence in France, I should doubtless be accused of great exaggeration, probably to accomplish party purposes.

In submitting to an English public the translation of this small work which obtained a great celebrity in France, and which has, under the blessing of God, been instrumental in doing much good, it may be well to remark, that it was not intended as a direct attack upon popery, with her many pompous and idle ceremonies, but most judiciously intended, indirectly, to show how nearly popery and paganism are allied, that it is a system based upon superstition and ignorance, and however much we may, in Christian charity, be induced to regard some of her devotees as conscientious, yet we are bound, nevertheless, to condemn her principles and practices; and we hesitate, not to affirm, that it is the prohibition of works which expose her iniquity, together with her own false interpretation of the Bible, which prevents the honest Roman catholic, from seeing, in awful colours, her iniquity fearfully pourtrayed.

It is not long since, that in passing a small village church in France my attention was directed to a large placard on the doors, prohibiting the reading of Mauvais livres, or in other words, the use of all protestant works; this announcement had been thought necessary from the priest having learnt that protestant tracts had been distributed in the village; this placard also contained directions, which had been given by the Archeveque, to all the priests, enjoining them diligently, to inquire of the people, what books they had read, and to denounce or allow the reading of them, as they thought proper.

Had, therefore, the small work, which is here translated, been put forth with a more specific reference to popery, it would have defeated its own ends, and failed to





reach persons for whose benefit it was intended.

To every attentive reader it will at once be seen, that the Roman Church has, like the children of Israel, followed after other gods, and has corrupted herself with the idolatry and abominations of the people among whom she has dwelt; and it is this which ought to influence the true servant of Christ, who would have all men to be saved. to use his utmost endeavour to entreat earnestly those who value their souls' eternal welfare, to come out of her, that they be not partakers of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. She has almost filled up the measure of her iniquity, and the agitating of the surrounding elements assures us that a storm is at hand. The angel is gone forth from the presence of an insulted and justly offended God, and soon shall the heavens resound with his mighty voice, and reecho these words, "Babylon the great, is fallen,

is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird: for all nations have drunk of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich, through the abundance of her delicacies." (Rev. xviii. 2, 3.)

The reader will observe, in reading under the head of Abstinences, that they are spoken of as "the fruits of an unregenerate heart," from which it is not to be inferred that the writer condemns all abstinences as decidedly wrong in the abstract, but only in proportion as they are used by man to work out his own salvation.

On the feast of Candles, or as it is more generally called, *Candle-mass*, it is customary for individuals to present candles to the church, and for the convenience of the public, persons are stationed at the entrance of the church, with stalls erected for the sale of them, and these to oblige all parties, are of

different sizes, and different prices; this is a great day among the people. In different parts of the church are fixtures with projecting points on which the candles are placed.

On the day set apart as the anniversary of the dead, all persons who have lost a relative or friend during the past year, repair to the church to celebrate mass for the repose of their souls, but they perfectly understand that their attendance at the mass, and their many prayers in conjunction with those of the priest, are in themselves ineffectual, and must be accompanied with l'argent (money) to be efficient. offerings of course are in proportion to their means, in fact the poor give far beyond their means. The priests themselves go round the church and collect of each person, not failing to mark well the liberality of each This fête is a very prolific source of revenue to them.

It is customary at the burial of a deceased person, to invite a great number of persons

to attend, known or unknown to the deceased himself; if the family be wealthy and influential, hundreds flock to the funeral, and too often I have noticed, that instead of its being a season for mourning or solemnity, it was made a season for conviviality. This great attendance of persons is by no means discouraged by the priest, as all who are present at the service in church are expected to contribute something towards obtaining relief for the soul of the deceased, and it is singular that the form, in every particular, is as nearly alike as possible to that of the pagan funeral ceremony described. The priests and choristers take the lead in the procession, they head the corpse, each holds a wax candle in his hand, which is a presentation to the church by the relations of the deceased. chant as they proceed through the streets.

At the fête Dieu, the priests proceed with the Host to bless the town; a number of families contribute to erect in different parts of their streets, an altar with a canopy over it, beautifully decorated with flowers, &c. Under this canopy the chief of the priests goes with the Host, and gives his benediction. It may be well to remark, that when the priest takes this Host (or image of God) to visit the sick and dying, every person who may be passing, takes off his hat, or bends the knee, and the soldiers present arms. How awful is such a sight to the Christian, to see an image the work of men's hands, made the object of such veneration.

I am aware that some weak minded persons who have returned from the Continent, after a short tour, have been struck with the apparent devotion of the people, and have spoken and written much in admiration of the visible sanctity; but strip off the outer covering of form, and habitual practice, and you will see ignorance, superstition, and iniquity beneath. The servant, after the six o'clock mass, returns home to his work and his evening dance, and thinks no more of the Sabbath; it is a Sabbath of

delight to the profligate and the gay, but the God of the Sabbath is never thought of.

It is so with the tradesman; you will see him return from the eight o'clock service, take down his shutters, and resume his place behind the counter. The high mass at ten, which the higher order only attend, is only made an occasion for the display and rivalship of fashion. These various services end the devotion for the day, and the ball and card-room are the places of rendezvous in the evening. This the meanest servant will claim as her special privilege. I cannot pass over these remarks without referring the reader to an admirable letter in the "Protestant World," written by a Mr. Rousel, entitled, "Romanism in France," in which he says, "the great mass believe neither in Jesus Christ, nor in the virgin, nor in the saints." This cannot be denied. The majority who compose the congregation at church are females, and if men are seen, in very few is it anything more than "a point of honour which induces them!" Men are indifferent to all religions, they see sufficiently the preposterous absurdity of popery, and they have never been instructed in the true doctrines of Christianity.

The Bible they have never seen, and many priests have never read it through, even in their own version. How then, it may be asked, can they teach others aright, who themselves have never been taught?

With respect to chapels set apart for the reception of relics, or objects, as witnesses of miraculous cures, or deliverances experienced, under the protecting care or intervention of some favourite saint, as observed by the pagan priests, it may be here noticed that the same thing is observed in the Church of Rome, and you can scarcely enter a church, in which you are not directed to the image or picture of some saint, beneath which are suspended different articles of dress, &c., which hang as proofs of his kind intervention. In sea-port towns, especially, large and numerous bequests are

made by sailors who are in general very superstitious.

Few persons will perhaps understand how all this can be done without a firm conviction, and belief on the part of the devotee: but who does not know the force of habit, and early prejudice; and even when the mind is convinced, it is no easy matter to throw off all restraint. The child has seen much of its parent's devotion, he has been taught by his mother to bend the little knee before the crucifix, he has vivid recollections of the sprinkling of the holy water on his infant cheek; it may be that weekly, or oftener, he has gone with her in whom his whole soul is centred, to plant the tender and sweet smelling flowers on the grave of an elder brother or sister, or it may be a father. Surrounded by the silent monuments of the dead, with the sombre yew waving its gloomy looking branches over his head, the little child looks earnestly up to its parent, in half dread at the solemn silence which marks the spot.

And as he looks upon her sweet countenance, he observes it bathed with tears, at the recollection of the painful bereavement, the painful separation by death from one so dear, the child of joy and hope, or the beloved and affectionate partner, in this world. Ah! these are things which make an impression in childhood which manhood cannot efface, and when conviction tells him there is much that is wrong, he cannot forget with what child-like confidence he believed all true and right that his parent did.

It is not until the Spirit from on high has breathed into his soul the breath of life, that he will come forward strenuously to oppose error and maintain truth. Blessed be God, the fabric of superstition is beginning to shake, and ere long it must fall. The pope may, by injustice and blood, be reinstated on his papal throne, but never again in the hearts of the people: a religion enforced by the sword, must perish by the sword.

S. W. W.



# POPERY: ITS ALLIANCE WITH PAGANISM.

ONE of the greatest evils which can happen to religion is formalism, that is to say, that natural tendency of the human heart to substitute an external ceremonial worship, instead of yielding an obedience of the heart to God, and serving him with the spirit, and with the understanding.

Doubtless if outward ceremonies were simply intended as expressions of our REAL love, and our homage to the Divine Creator, they might, to a certain extent, be somewhat excusable; but, we must acknowledge, that often, yea almost always, they are only deceitful signs of what is passing in our souls: they are like the bark which covers the tree deprived of life; or a handsome

cloak which covers misery and nakedness; a beautiful body, but a body without a soul.

This formalism, so natural to man, had completely covered the world when Jesus Christ came, and taught that God is a Spirit,\* and they who worship him, must worship him in *spirit*, and in truth.

The tendency of our protestant religion to destroy this formalism, and to substitute in its stead a *living piety*, is then, one of the many proofs of its divine origin, and it is that proof which we purpose to develope in the present design.

\* By πνυμα, or Spirit, is here meant an immaterial and invisible nature, without parts or passions, and not circumscribed by space or limits, as everything corporeal must be. The expression, however, involves also, the attributes and perfections of the Deity, his omniscience, omnipotence, infinite goodness, &c.

That the wiser Jews had tolerably correct ideas of the spirituality of God, and the necessity of a corresponding spirituality in his worship, is plain from various passages adduced by Schoettgen. That the very heathens were not quite ignorant of this truth, appears from the classical citations in Lampe and Wetstein.—(Ex. gr. Cato, Dist. i. 1. "Si Deus est animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt, hic tibi practipue sit vera mente colendus."—Bloomfield, Note on St. John iv. 24, and extracted by the Translator.)

In the following pages, we shall cite well known authors, in proof of the various ceremonies and practices which distinguished the "Pagan Religion," more particularly those for which Rome, the capital of the world, was remarkable.

That we may advance nothing doubtful, we have been careful to refer both to pagan and Christian writers of that period, and we only repeat what they have written, in proof of which, for the satisfaction of our readers, we have given with the greatest care, the names of the works and authors from which we have made our extracts; not a word shall proceed from ourselves, all, absolutely all, shall be brought from certain and impartial sources.

About the year 837 of Rome, (A.D. 84) paganism almost exclusively reigned alone in the capital. Scarcely any Christians were to be found amongst this vast population. The most complete demoralization accompanied their idolatrous worship, and what was most strange, the more immoral the

people were, the more they were attached to their religious ceremonies. This singularity, can however be understood by those who are acquainted with the peculiar workings of the human heart. When we hear our conscience proclaim a clear distinction between vice and virtue,-when we hear that heathen nations worship a divinity, and expect a futurity, we cannot reasonably doubt the existence of a superior principle, opposed to the degeneracy of human nature, and which must be the gift of the Creator. It is this principle which imparts the desire to pursue virtue, but, such is the power of man's sensual feelings, that he fails in his object, and is thrust into an opposite path; \* in so painful an alternative, of either vanquishing his desires, or by gratifying them, submit to the just chastisement of an offended God, what must he do? (Dans cette alternative pénible, de vaincre son

<sup>•</sup> This statement, I think is fully borne out in the lives of many exemplary philosophers, such as Seneca and others.—Translator.

penchant ou d'accepter la perspective du châtiment divin, que fera-t-il?) In the first place, he cedes to his passion of sensual gratification, and afterwards, in order to efface the guilt, and appease the anger of an offended God, he offers an atonement of his own invention, this is what one would foresee, and what has happened. Man, feeling himself guilty, offered to his God, first, sacrifices of fruits or animals; soon after, he began to sacrifice his ease, his health, in submitting to fasts, sufferings, mortifications of his body; and that done, he, again following the course of his evil passions, feels persuaded that these sacrifices have proved efficacious, to prevent the terrible consequence of the violation of his duty. From the invention of rites to remove the criminality of faults, there was only one step to the discovery of practices, which should take the place of virtues, and this step was easily taken. Man, who imagined that God would accept the sacrifice of a bull, as a substitute for himself,

could well suppose that he would accept the words of love instead of love itself, exterior signs of adoration in the place of heart worship,—the prayer of the lip, for the fervent aspiration of the soul; and as all these exterior ceremonies had in them some affinity with the sentiments of which they had been of old the expression, man profited by them, by putting each day more confidence in the ceremonial act, and in like manner, attached less importance to the internal spirituality of feeling. It was a treaty between conscience and passionpassion, reconciled, granted the conscience yields the point, and thus, both are made subject to the purposes and feelings of man.

Such is, probably, the course which was taken by the human heart, to arrive at the systematic formalism, which we find established in Pagan Rome, at the period when Christianity came to reform the world. But to proceed to details,—and first:—

### OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF.

At the head of the pagan clergy was placed, under the name of the Sovereign Pontiff,\* the visible chief of religion. This Sovereign Pontiff, Virgil tells us, even took the name of God.† However, we would believe, that he did not pretend to be God himself, but only the representative upon earth, of the God of heaven, whom the Romans named Jupiter, and the Scythians Pope.‡ Not only did the Sovereign Pontiff usurp the absolute (ce pretendu lieutenant de la Divinité sur la terre) divinity of God upon earth, but also his authority: not only did he reign as king, imposing taxes upon the inferior priests and the people, but he also required



<sup>\*</sup> Alexander ab Alexandro, Genial, lib. ii. Titus Livius, and Plutarch.

 <sup>† ——&</sup>quot;Deus nobis hæc otia fecit;
 Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus: illius aram
 Sæpe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus."
 Virgil, Ecloque I. to Octavianus: lines 6—8.

<sup>‡</sup> Herodotus, lib. iv., 59. "Ζεος δε ορθοτατα κατα γιωμην γετην εμην καλειται παπαιος."

from them marks of respect which resembled adoration. It was a small thing to require that they should kneel as he passed, he even required those who approached his person to kiss his feet.\* History gives us for example, Caligula and Heliogabalus, who were, at the same time, emperors and pontiffs; that is to say, who had at Rome double power, spiritual and temporal. But to give a more just idea of these Roman pagan pontiffs, we cannot do better than quote word for word, a passage extracted from a contemporary author. "They have (the Sovereign Pontiffs) a sovereign authority over the greatest affairs, for they judge all causes which concern sacred things. as well between private persons as between the magistrates; and as the ministers of the gods they establish new laws upon their own authority. They make an inspection of all the sacrifices, and likewise of those who take the first part in the various cere-

<sup>\*</sup> Titus Livius, lib. ix. Cicero de Leg. lib. i. Titus Livius, xxx. Suetonius, in the life of Claudius.

monies, and those in inferior situations are equally watched that they do nothing contrary to their sacred ceremonies. are also the interpreters, and prophets to whom the people go, to consult upon the worship of the gods and saints. likewise take upon themselves, to punish at their own discretion, any who are found not to obey their commands, but as to themselves, they are not responsible to any man's judgment. They are independent, and are not obliged to render an account, either to the senate or the people. When one of them dies another is put in his place, chosen not by the people, but by the Holy College." \*

We can easily imagine how great an abuse of such widely extended power these pontiffs of the false gods could make, we know that princes and people have often trembled beneath their tyranny, and we can only regard it as a signal blessing from



<sup>\*</sup> Dionysius Halicarnassensis. Roman Antiquities lib. ii.

Heaven that Jesus Christ came at this juncture to teach men that the offices of priest and prince, are not to be united in one person, that religion and politics are of a distinct nature, that the representatives of heavenly things should "set their affections on things above, and not on things of the earth." When the people desired to set Him on the throne, and make Him a king, He hid himself from them.\* And when Pilate asked Him "Art thou a king?" He answered him in those memorable words which ought to make priests and pontiffs tremble "My kingdom is not of this world."+ The first Apostles followed in the steps of their divine Master without ever seeking to arrogate to themselves, such unlawful power, and the words of St. Peter strongly deprecate the power exercised both by the sovereign pontiff and the priests.‡

<sup>\*</sup> St. John vi. 15. † St. John xviii. 36. ‡ 1 Pet. v. 1—3.

### THE PRIESTS.

After the great pontiff, came a numerous clergy divided into many classes some; lived in the Temples and offered sacrifices.\* Those among them who had the inspection, or care of the people (inspection sur le peuple) took the name of curio.

Their sacrifices did not always consist in immolating animals, sometimes there was a little round bread, the offering of which at the altar effaced, they said, the sins of the people, (aussi quelquefois un petit pain rond dont l'offrande à l'autel effaçait, disaient-ils, les péchés du peuple.)+

It would seem, from a passage in Cicero, that some calumniators of those priests went so far as to pretend that in eating this bread, they believed they ate the body of their God, because Cicero observes, in seeming vindication of such accusation, "when have we ever found men so void of



<sup>\*</sup> Memoires de Marolles.

<sup>+</sup> Pollux, in Onom, i. vi.—Alex. ab. Alex., i. iv. c. 17.

good sense, as to believe that the things which they ate, and by which they were nourished could be their Gods?"\*

In fact, who would think it possible, that the mind of man could ever descend to such a degree of absurdity, as to imagine that man can eat his God!

The Jews, a people of small intelligence, understood themselves, that they could not eat the flesh of man, for when Jesus said, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life" meaning in other words, "Whoso believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 26), they revolted at the idea, and said, "Can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

This little round morsel of bread (petit pain rond) was named by the pagans mola, from which comes immolare, as from hostia comes hostire, two verbs, both of which signify to sacrifice. Alexander ab Alexandro named this sacrifice, insti-

<sup>\*</sup> De Natura Deorum. iii.

tuted by Numa, non sanglant, or unbloody. But in order to detail the manner, in which, in general, this sacrifice was offered, we extract numerous passages from pagan authors, which will give to the reader a more just idea of the whole.

Respecting the time for offering the sacrifice, it was ordained that it should be offered before mid-day, the morning being looked upon as the most favourable time.\* The priest began, by first covering himself with a white robe, called Alba, and a coloured Tunic; his head was shaved,† his breast covered with a pectoral, he also wore a veil, named Amict,‡ after having washed his hands, the Priest thus dressed made a tour of the altar, with his head bowing downwards, (le prêtre ainsi vêtu faisait le tour de l'autel en s'inclinant) and then placed himself in front of the people who were present at the sacrifice. Lighted wax



<sup>\*</sup> Du Choul, page 309. + Apul, Asin. lib. ii.

<sup>‡</sup> Plutarch, in the Life of Theseus.—Herodotus, in Euterpe.

tapers ornamented the Altar.\* The assisting priests burnt incense.† The Priest made some few bows before the Altar.‡ He spoke Latin; when the sacrifice was finished, the image of their god was again locked up, § and the people were dismissed with these words, Missio est || (he is sent away); then the worshippers on leaving, sprinkled themselves with a salt water which they called eau lustrale,¶ or water of purification, and returned home fully convinced that the god whom they worshipped had absolved them from their sins.

The awful consequences attending such a deluding and pompous ceremony, are easily conceived; the people, relieved from the weight of their sins by this pretended

- \* Plut. in Ant. Fenestelle, chap. v.
- + Tibullus lib. ii. Eleg. i. Virgil, Æneid, ix.
- ‡ Lactantius, lib. vi. Instit. cap. ii. Tertull. de Idolo, c. xv. Ovid Fast. lib. ii.
  - § Cicero, De Off. lib. iii. Virg. Æn. lib. i.
  - || Polydore Virgil. Arnob. lib. vi.
- ¶ Apul, lib. ii. De Asino. Aureo,—Cicero, De Leg. lib. xi. Ovid, Fast. v. "Aqua Lustralis."

pardon, soon regained their peace of conscience, and the thought that they were now purified before their god, satisfied them that there was little danger to be apprehended in the committal of a new crime, as that would be the only one charged against them, and besides which it was only to renew the sacrifice to obtain a renewal of pardon; thus satisfied, sin was committed with impunity.

Religious societies of men and women were also established which bore the name of the god or hero to which they were more particularly dedicated. It is thus that Romulus instituted the order of the brothers of the field, (frères des champs)\* afterwards they had the society of Augustus, the brothers of the society of Hadrian and of Antonine; among their number were some who took the order of Mendicants. "These idle men living upon the fat of the people,



<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Arāles fratres." This order of the Brothers made a tour through the country once a year, to bless the land, and invoke a blessing on the fruits of the earth.—Translator.

went into the streets and bye-ways" said Augustus, "and obtained from the people that which enabled them to live in a most shameful manner."\*

Apuleius, in his eighth book of the Metamorphoses, represents these religious mendicants in a most ludicrous manner. Beneath the allegory of a golden ass, he makes known their hypocrisy and imposition; and how, under the pretext of devotion, they amassed to themselves, money, barrels of wine, milk, cheese, wheat and barley; "they took all with ardour," says he "and put all that was given them into their bags: rambling thus, they devoured the country."

It is necessary for us to remember that they were *Pagans* to believe such things: their wicked practices at last became so notorious, as to make it necessary for the magistrate to prohibit them, by positive laws, "because," said Cicero, "they filled the people with superstition and impoverished

<sup>\*</sup> De Civit. Dei, lib. vii. cap. 26.

their families." Minucius Felix says, "that they wore a particular habit, and walked with naked feet, others made a vow of silence,\* and some of poverty.†" But it must be said in honour of these, Pagans though they were, that some kept their vow. However, Apuleius represents them in general as hypocrites, and it is said by others, that these pretended poor people (ces pretendu pauvres et mendicants) lived sumptuously, in their convents which were situated in the most agreeable places.‡

- Diogenes Laert. Vie de Pythag.
- + Lactantius, lib. i. cap. i. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. v. cap.  $\mathbf{xvii}.$
- ‡ Plato in Timæo. En passant I must here mention the Society of Vestales, or Vestal Virgins, who were priestesses dedicated to the service of the goddess Vesta, daughter of Rhea and Saturn, and sister to Ceres and Juno, the patroness of the Vestal Virgins, and the goddess of fire. Æneas first introduced her mysteries into Italy, and Numa built a temple to her, in which it is supposed the palladium of Troy was secreted. The duty of the virgins thus dedicated, was to keep continually burning the fire sacred to Vesta. They wore a white vest with purple borders, also a white linen surplice called linteum supernum. The head-dress was a



Here then we see idleness, hypocrisy, and every other sin systematically carried on under the garb of sanctity; how opposed to such, is the spirit of true Christianity! which by inculcating industry, and teaching "that by the sweat of man's brow must he eat bread," demonstrates beyond a doubt, that its author is none other than the Creator himself, who, has given to man the faculties, both of body and mind, to do so.

close covering, called *infula*. They were maintained at public expense; and though professing to be satisfied with simple and frugal diet, yet their tables were covered with the luxuries and superfluities of the great and opulent.

Such hypocrisy is not less characteristic of the societies in connection with papal Rome. Who does not remember with what surprise and disgust, Luther expressed himself, when he beheld the sumptuous manner, in which the Benedictines of the convent situated on the river Po, in Lombardy, daily revelled; and how his visit to Italy and Rome on that occasion opened his eyes to the deceit and iniquity of popery. "If any one would give me 100,000 florins," said he, "I would not have missed seeing Rome." And his opinion of Rome is thus strongly expressed: "If there be hell, Rome is built above it, it is an abyss from whence all sins proceed."—
Translator.

### ABSTINENCES.

Abstinences of various kinds have ever been practised in religions of human invention: they are the fruits of an unregenerate heart, which, to satisfy divine vengeance would influence man to attempt to procure for himself acceptance with the offended deity, by some personal bodily suffering (elles sont les fruits naturels de notre cœur, qui aime á s'imposer quelque géne dans un penchant peu prononcé, afin de conserver plus de liberté dans une passion dominante). It almost always follows, that, where great mortification of the flesh has distinguished the devotees of a pagan religion, the more immorality has abounded; some abstain from meat,\* others impose painfully protracted fasts,+ others inflict upon themselves corporeal punishment, with whips, instruments, &c. ‡ At Lacedemonia, for example, they had instituted the feast of



<sup>\*</sup> Hieron, adv Jovin, lib. ii.

<sup>+</sup> Titus Livius, Decad. 4, lib. vi. Ovid. lib. iv. Fast.

<sup>‡</sup> Hieron, lib. ii.—Apul. Asin. Aur., lib. viii.

flagellation (la fête de la flagellation); others afterwards imposed a life of celibacy,\* many of whom drank a prepared liquor to render them impotent; some shaved their heads, some performed journeys of pilgrimage:† others made sacred neuvaines, or nine days devotion, says Marolles, and all that took the appearance of sanctity.

From the light of God's Word, we see how that, that pure and holy being, who is the very omniscient God, looks to the heart, and not so much to outward form. How much such practices are opposed to that word of truth and righteousness, which is the standard of true Christianity, the few passages here referred to will show.‡

<sup>\*</sup> Ibid cont. Jovin, lib. i. in fine. Juv. Sat. 6.

<sup>+</sup> Juv. Sat. 6.

<sup>‡ 1</sup> Cor. ix. 5; x. 25, 26. 1 Tim. iii. 2; iv. 3, 4.

# REVENUES OF THE PAGAN PRIESTS.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire," says the Bible, we should not then have spoken of the revenues of these priests, if they had been content with the salary due to a workman. But their ambition contrasted so much with their pretended piety, that we cannot pass this over in silence.

The avarice of these priests, so far removed from the precepts of Christianity, shed in contrast thereof, the greater lustre upon the religion of the Bible.

When a pagan wished to obtain the favour of his gods, he solicited the priest to offer a sacrifice for him, and for that, payment was made to the priest.\* We can understand how easy it was for a moneygetting priest to frighten so superstitious

<sup>\*</sup> To know the different sources from which the revenues of the priests were obtained, see Blondus Rom. Triumph, lib. ii. p. 33. Tit. Liv., lib. ix. Cicero de Leg. lib. i. Tit. Liv. lib. xxx. Sueton. in Claudio. Apolog. de Saint Justin Sueton. Vit. de Caligula. Horat. Carm. lib. ii.

a people, into a confession of their sins, and a multiplication of their sacrifices. At other times, they influenced the people to cause prayers to be said for the dead, and those prayers only were efficacious which were paid for, in fact, the efficacy was in proportion to the payment. pagan who had loved his father or mother, willingly emptied his purse to release his parents from the torments of the Furies. Again, the priests never failed to solicit the sick and the dying for a legacy, for which, the promise of additional prayers and sacrifices for the soul's repose, was given. Thus by the prayers and sacrifices paid for, the gods would become favourable to them after their death, and a ready entrance be given them to the Elysian fields.

The higher order of clergy had other resources. The Sovereign Pontiff, for example, levied taxes upon the public, obtained donations from private individuals; they went so far in Rome, as to give protection

to women of immoral character, on condition that they should receive one tithe of the profits derived from their immoral practices (il alla même dans Rome jusqu' à protéger l'infâm métier de femme publique, sous la condition qu'elles lui remettraient la dime de leurs gains infames); thus authorizing for money, crimes in public, which they condemned in their temples. One prolific source from which the Sovereign Pontiff obtained much riches, was the offering of first fruits, which they called annata, these were derived from the first year of all benefices, which they gave, sold, or dispensed, retaining to themselves the whole of the first year's income. Thus, the pagan temple became as it were the shop of the merchant. And to them, as also to the Jews, who had made their temple a house of merchandize, the words of Christ are equally applicable.\*

Happily, the religion of Christ is opposed to this disgusting avarice, this mercantile

<sup>\*</sup> St. John ii. 16. St. Luke xix. 46.

known or unknown.\* Plutarch names this month "the month of expiation." +

Passing on from the ceremonies referring to the dead, we must briefly notice those which had reference to the funerals.

Before removing the deceased from the house, the relatives and friends assembled, and the body was then sprinkled with water taken from an earthen vase. When the corpse, together with the procession, had arrived at the temple, the assistants were sprinkled three times with water, for which purpose an olive branch was used; after this, the friends and relatives, bearing lighted tapers, accompanied the mortal remains to the cemetery.‡

\* "Est honor et tumulis; animas placare paternas parvaque in extructas munere ferre pyras: parva petunt manes: pietas pro divite gratia est Munere; non avidos Styx habet ima Deos. Tegula porrectis satis velata coronis; Et sparsæ finges, parvaque mica salis."—Ovid. Fast. ii. 533. See also the "Golden Legend"; and Cicero in his first oration against Antony.

+ Polyd. Virg. lib. vi. cap. ix.

Lucet via longo,
Ordine flammarum, et late discriminat agros."

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Virg. Æn. ii. 144.

There existed also numerous other fêtes, of an equally showy and attractive nature. It must suffice that we speak now of one only, which will give to the reader a just idea of the whole, and in doing so, we quote fragments which we have gathered from heathen authors themselves.

A procession was formed, and the heathen goddess carried through the principal streets and lanes of the city. The walls and houses of the streets and lanes through which the procession passed\* were hung with cloth or tapestry. The procession moved slowly and with great pomp † In the rear followed long files of women elegantly dressed in white, scattering flowers as they passed.‡ After them were men carrying lighted tapers; numerous musicians, playing some-

Again, "Hinc tuba, candelæ," &c.—Persius Sat. iii. 103. See also Pol. Virg. lib. viii. cap. viii., and Ovid, in the Epistle of Cydippus to Acontius, 172. "Et pace pro thalami, pax mihi mortis crat."

- \* Blond. Rom. Tr. p. 52. Polyd. Virgil, lib. vi. c. xi.
- + Apul. Metam. lib. ii. Dion. Halicarn. lib. vi.
- ‡ Apul. Metam.



times in soft and gentle harmony and at other times a warlike march, calculated to strike the imagination of the amazed crowd; after them advanced in pairs hundreds of young children dressed in white and singing songs in honour of their divinities.

The priests, who were much venerated, and the crowns of whose heads were shaven, carried with great pomp the holy relics; those of the inferior order carried different objects, the one an altar, the other a coffer containing mysteries, and a third an image of his god.\* Both princes and magistrates of the state were in attendance at this procession—the princes immediately behind the priests; a crowd of persons in disorder followed; these formed the procession. In the different corners of the streets were erected altars, at which the procession never failed to stop, on it the priests placed the image of the god, and, after going through

<sup>\*</sup> All the preceding details are given by Apuleius in his account of the procession of Diana.

some few ceremonies, the procession slowly moved on.

The object of some of these processions was to obtain rain or fine weather, &c., and were named "Fêtes of Supplication," says Macrobius.\*

It must be confessed, that such pompous and imposing ceremonies could not fail to produce great influence on the imagination of an ignorant and superstitious people, and were well calculated to fill them with veneration for the priests. Tertullian, one of the fathers of the christian church, in the fourth century, represents these processions as a proof of the blindness of the pagans, and derides in his "Apology" these idolaters.†

<sup>\*</sup> See Polyd. Virg. lib. vi. cap. xi.

<sup>&</sup>quot;His rebus gestis ex literis Cæsaris dierum xv. supplicatio a senatu decreta est."—Cæs. B. G. lib. iii.

<sup>+</sup> Apol. cap. v. 13, et. xl.

### THE DEMI-GODS.

THE men who most distinguished themselves during their lives, were, after death, placed in the heavens under the name of demigods.\*

When the college of priests had determined thus to deify an individual, it was sufficient that they proclaimed his apotheosis, he was then considered by the people as beatified, and prayers were immediately addressed to him, his praises sung, and his aid invoked.

Among this crowd of divinities each profession chose his favourite saint: the musicians chose Apollo, the sailors, Neptune, and the labourers, Ceres.+

Each town had its protecting divinity: Athens adored more particularly Minerva, Rome chose Jupiter Capitolinus.

Each god had his particular attributes: Apollo was invoked to drive away pestilence,

<sup>\*</sup> Cicero, de Leg. lib. ii., et de Natura Deorum.

<sup>+</sup> Arnob. contr. Gent. lib. iii. Augustine de Civitate Dei, lib. vi., cap. ix.

Juno was said to preside over accouchements. Temples were soon built to these favourite gods, and particular chapels set apart; in some of them sacrifices were offered, to others they went on pilgrimage, in others various objects were placed, as testimonies of miraculous cures performed or providential escapes experienced through the favour of the saint who had been invoked. Sailors who had been saved from shipwreck would there place the garments they had worn; a lame man, cured against his expectation, would bring his crutch. Horace alludes to this custom.\* Tibullus gives the following passage: "Come, now, goddess, come to my help; for the numerous paintings suspended

• ——— "Me tabulå sacer
Votivå paries indicat uvida
Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris Deo."
The above lines are thus translated by Francis,
"I now safe on shore,
Will consecrate the pictured storm,
And all my grateful vows perform,
To Neptune's saving power."

in thy temple prove sufficiently, that thou hast power to help us."†

For the rest, we have sufficient proof in our own day, of the deification of crowds of mortals. The temples which were built by the pagans of Rome remain to this day, that city is full of them, only they have changed their names, but the inscriptions which they bear, tell us, they are the same buildings which are now dedicated to christian saints. The temple which was then dedicated to Juno is now consecrated to St. Michael; that of Hercules, to St. Stephen; that of Fortune, to St. Mary of Egypt; the Pantheon, which had been consecrated to all the gods of Olympus, is now dedicated to all the saints of Paradise.

Such was the system of pagan idolatry; each chose his patron saint, and to him he looked for protection and success in life; to him that adoration was paid, which was due exclusively to the Creator. Such could not

+ Tibul. lib. i. Eleg. 3.

only be regarded as a crime of treason, but as a quicksand of danger.

To this self-chosen idol each one would attribute his own sensual feelings and desires. and so would indulge in his own darling passion, and cherish it without remorse. The thief, for instance would devote part of his unlawful booty to Mercury, and suppose the remainder thereby sanctified to his own use. In like manner, also, the prostitute divided the fruits of her prostitution with the priests of Venus, and imagined that she should thereby enjoy the other half of her iniquitous gains in peace of conscience. ("La femme impure partageait avec les prêtres de Venus, le fruit de ses prostitutions, et s'imaginait pouvoir jouir de l'autre moitie de ses gains en tout paix de conscience.")

# PRAYERS AND PURGATORY.

THE invention of purgatory was, perhaps, the most skilful which could have been invented by the pagan priests. An intermediate place was supposed to exist between hell, where the greatest sinners went, never to go out; and the Elysian fields, where only the virtuous could enter: this vast place was said to be intended for the great majority of men who were not of either extreme, neither too good nor too wicked, but who, nevertheless, required a time for purification in this intermediate place of reception. Virgil says, "there the souls of men suffer the pain due to ancient crimes (or their past crimes); some rest suspended in the air, agitated by the winds; others are plunged into an immense gulf or devoured in the flames, where they remain until their sins have been purged and their souls made meet for heaven."\*

This invention was made productive to

<sup>\*</sup> Virgil, Æneid, lib. 6.

the priests, in that they taught that they possessed power to absolve them from their torments and sufferings, by their sacrifices and prayers—prayers and sacrifices, we are to understand, which were well paid for by the friends and relatives of the deceased. Thus did the priests profit by the dead as well as by the living.

What wife or child possessing the least love for the memory of a deceased husband or parent, whom the imagination would depict as being in the midst of the flames of purgatory, would not gladly hasten to give what they could, in order that their beloved relatives might have an abridgment of pain? No sacrifice at such a time was thought too dear. The priest was paid, the sacrifice performed, and the deluded conscience found rest, while in fact the soul remained as when it left the body, in an unalterable state, either of happiness or woe.

How admirably does the gospel of Christ contrast with this mercantile system of man!



Hear it proclaiming that after death there are only two abodes for the soul, heaven and hell, thus sweeping away the ideal purgatory of man's invention; no more purgatory, consequently no more souls to retire from it, no more sacrifices to make for them, no more money for iniquitous priests to receive, and no more people to deceive.

How weak must be the mind which would now place faith in such a system when the gospel has so clearly revealed that "after death cometh the judgment."

How can it now be said that there exists a third place, when Jesus the great Teacher of true spiritual Christianity speaks but of two in the description he has given of the last judgment. "These," says he "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting."\* It must be confessed, that the religion of Christ, to obtain better belief, must be better known.

\* Matt. xxv. 26.

We can understand how, in proportion as they valued the efficacy of those prayers and sacrifices, would be their repetition of them; which was precisely the case; two were thought to be worth more than one, ten were worth more than five; hence it was that they would repeat, twenty and even thirty times in the course of the same day, the same words; they even took to count their prayers, and, fearful of saying too much or too little, they had a long cord on which they threaded grains, these they made to pass through their fingers, as often as the prayers passed from their lips.

In such an enlightened age as the present we could scarcely bring ourselves to believe in such a painful aberration of the human mind, were it not a fact attested by an author worthy of belief. The Bible teaches us that a custom not less strange existed among the priests of the false god Baal, who, during a whole morning repeated this litany, "Baal, hear us." \*

<sup>\* 1</sup> Kings, xviii. 28.

A practice yet more strange, perhaps, imprinted with the same spirit, is to be found in our days among an Indian people: these poor idolaters, imagining that in their invocations the sound of their voices striking the air is that which pleases their god, suppose that prayers inclosed in a hollow cylinder, and placed on the top of a high mountain, and put in motion by the wing of a windmill, the noise of them, as they are agitated by the air, is as efficacious as if the words of love for God proceeded from the bottom of their hearts. Here is an extreme consequence, it is true, but it is a rigorous consequence, of formalism. Is there not here a proof that if paganism, which contents itself with measured lip-prayers, and counted upon the seeds of a chaplet, comes from the earth, that Christianity, which will only admit of prayers from the heart, is from heaven?

It would be an easy task to cite numerous pagan customs combated by the religion of Jesus Christ, such as filling the churches with images and pictures, so much so that it was said by Gregory of Néocésarée, that "the Pagan religion was the inventor and the mother of images." Then we might notice also the wearing of amulets as preservatives from sickness or accident, &c.\* But I think the preceding pages must prove sufficient to open the eyes of the reader.

\* Plutarch's life of Romulus.

### APPENDIX.

In the form of an appendix I will add an extract from Mr. Elliott's, "Horæ Apocalypticæ," which, in explanation of prophetic Scripture, explains most forcibly, the Apostacy of the true Church, and the amalgamation of Pagan Rome with Papal Rome, as seen in all her various forms and ceremonies.

I am induced thus to quote at large, because the original work itself is too scarce and too expensive to reach persons for whose instruction and benefit I have put forth this little work.

The remarks are upon the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, in which is described:

"First. The persons and state of things indicated by the two associated symbols of the woman and the dragon: viz. the travelling woman, Christ's true Church, the mother of 'those who keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus

Christ,' and the great red dragon, symbolizing a persecuting Antichristian power.

"Second. The historical solution of the crisis.

"It is to be remembered then, that in the year A. D. 303, when Dioclesian and Galerius published their terrible edicts of persecution against the Christians, the Roman Empire was divided into four Tetrarchies, governed respectively by themselves, in the character of the two Augusti, or senior Emperors; and Maxentius and Constantius as thetwo Cæsars, or junior Emperors. Soon after this, Dioclesian abdicated: and a few other changes having occurred in the years next following, the Empire was at the commencement of the year 311 thus partitioned:-Britain, Gaul, and Spain under Constantine, the son and successor to Constantius:-Italy, together with the African Provinces under Maxentius:-Illyricum under Licinius:—the East of Europe, with Asia, under Galerius, now the first in dignity of the Augusti:—and Syria and Egypt under

Maximin: which last of the list had just previously been appointed, with the Syrian and Egyptian government as his appanage, a fifth Emperor. During this period what the Church suffered it is needless to recount. The sorrows of a woman in travail had indeed come upon her. In the May following, however, light dawned on the Christians. From his sick and dying bed, the conscience-stricken Galerius issued an Edict of Toleration in their favour:an edict which was published in the names of Constantine and Licinius, as consentient parties, as well as his own; though not Maxentius or Maximin. And when, in the course of the two next eventful years, the following further changes had occurred: the European provinces of Galerius been appropriated on his death by Licinius; the Asiatic by Maximin, and those of the Emperor Maxentius, on his defeat and death by Constantine. When in this manner, the Roman Empire had for the first time become tripartited between three Emperors;

the precedency among whom I may just observe in passing, was adjudged to Constantine; the Christians emerged from these political revolutions thus variously circumstanced. In two-thirds of the Empire, embracing its whole European and African territory, they enjoyed toleration, and presently after by virtue of the celebrated Milan Decree of Constantine and Licinius, issued March, 313, in their favour, the imperial kindly recognition and support: in the other, or Asiatic third, they were still, after a brief and uncertain respite, exposed to persecution in all its bitterness and cruelty as before.

"And now then was not the state of things in the Roman Empire one that precisely answered to the crisis depicted in the vision?—First, the Christian Church united as one, and morally bright and beautiful, abundantly the more so from the purifying effect of the late persecution, appeared before the world ascendant, for the first time, in the political heaven: with the sun-

shine embracing it of the highest of the three Imperial dignities, and the light and favour of the second also beaming on it: moreover, with the Chief Bishops resplendent at its head, as a starry coronal; they being recognized generally as ecclesiastical dignitaries, and soon twelve of the number distinguished from among the rest as the heads of the dudical polynomerous of the mystic Israel.

"The time at which she thus appeared is observable as the expiration of her 40th week of gestation, measured on the year-day prophetic chronological scale from the Lord's ascension. Her travail had begun above a prophetic week before, in the Dioclesian persecution; and long, and painful, and ineffective hitherto had been her sufferings. She had been with child; she had been in pain; she had brought forth, but wind; she had wrought no deliverance on the earth.\*

But now the moment for her deliverance had come. The throes immediately preceding child-birth were upon her, and under

<sup>\*</sup> Isaiah xxvi. 17, 18.

the best auspices. The imperial edict of favour to the Christians was but the precursor evidently to the establishment of Christianity, and by consequence its supremacy in the Empire; i.e., to the birth of the man child, and his assumption to God's throne. And what next but the ruling of the pagans with a rod of iron? For it had long been evident that Christianity and Paganism could not consist together in power; and that on the elevation of the former, there must needs follow the oppression, and, finally, destruction of the latter.

"On the other hand, to turn to the second symbol represented,—the old Roman pagan power, concentrated for the time in Maximin, the third ruler in the Roman world, and Emperor from the Nile to the Bosphorus, with a Satanic enmity animating it against the Gospel and the Church, appeared like the great red dragon in the vision. Infuriate at the now imminent prospect of the Christian body attaining establish-

ment in the Empire, Maximin renewed the persecution against Christians within the limits of his own dominion: prohibiting their assemblies, and degrading, and even killing their Bishops. 'He drew with his tail the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the ground,' and as the vital blow against the Christian cause and Church needed to be struck, as he thought, at those Emperors who had adopted and patronized it, he made war against them, and rushed furiously to the conflict. The Dragon that had stood before the woman, when ready to be delivered, hasted to devour her child in the very act of birth.

"Such seems to have been the exact crisis figured in the vision before us. It was the crisis of the last struggle of ascendant Paganism to retain supremacy, and crush Christianity in the Empire. 'Before the decisive battle,' says Milner, 'Maximin vowed to Jupiter, that, if victorious, he would abolish the Christian name. The contest between Jehovah and Jupiter was at its height,

and drawing to a crisis.' And what was the result? His fury, as we know, was in vain.

"On the 30th of April, 313, he was defeated by Licinius; and three or four months after he died, like Galerius, in agonies, confessing himself vanquished. 'His death,' says Gibbon, 'delivered the Church from the last and most implacable of her enemies.' It remained to the Dragon, and the Pagan power that survived, though broken, in the Empire, to behold the birth of the man child completed, and then the man child wonderfully caught up to God's throne: in other words, to see the Christian body, now headed and represented by Constantine, elevated with marvellous rapidity to a Christian, an avowedly Christian throne. 'Our Emperor dear to God,' says Eusebius, 'sustains an Empire, which is the image of the heavenly Empire, and rules it in imitation of Him, who is greater than all, the supreme Lord of the world.' The result, not immediately indeed, but after a while, just according to the singularly precise language of the prefigurative prophecy, proved to be this to the Pagans of the Empire;—their being ruled as with a rod of iron. At first, indeed, an equal toleration was accorded by Constantine to Pagans as to Christians. But 'the exact balance of the two religions continued but a moment. As he grew older, his discountenance of them became more marked. By his successors, disfavour was increased into intolerance. At length, under Theodosius, all toleration of Paganism was put an end to; and worship and rites interdicted under pain of the severest penalties.'

"It was observable, however, that the struggle did not end in the figurative heaven with the dragon's failure to prevent the man-child's birth. After a passing notice of the woman (presently to be resumed) as fleeing towards, and destined to, a long sojourn in the wilderness,—for shortlived, indeed, is the association of Christ's true church with the splendours and honours of this world; after this, a notice occurs in the vision of war in heaven, 'And there

was war in heaven,' the same heaven, of course, as before spoken of; 'Michael fought, and his angels; and the dragon fought with his angels.' The antagonist principles intended, evidently were Christianity and paganism, and powers invisible, as well as visible,—the one headed by Michael, captain of the Lord's host, the other by Satan, appeared to mingle in the conflict. The fulfilment was seen in the seduction of Licinius, through ambitious motives, to head afresh the dragon's cause against Christianity and Constantine: and then in his two successive defeats and death, and the consequent and (except for its momentary re-elevation under Julian), final dejection of paganism, A.D. 324, from its high places in the empire: that of the figuration next following; 'The dragon was cast out of heaven, and his angels; and his place no more found therein.' The exactness of the imagery seems indeed very striking; nor was its meaning, even at the time of the fulfilment, unrecognized. Who,

a better commentator on it than Constantine himself? In a letter to Eusebius, he writes of 'that dragon having been deposed from the governance of affairs by God's providence.' And Eusebius further relates, that in a picture elevated by Constantine over his palace-gate, there was represented the cross, the ensign of salvation, placed over his head; and beneath, his enemy and that of the human race (viz., Licinius, or rather Satan that had animated him) under the semblance of a dragon precipitated into the abyss. Then follows:—

"Thirdly. The EMILLION, or SONG OF VICTORY. 'And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven; Now there hath come the salvation, and power, and kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren hath been cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives, even unto death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens, and

ye that tabernacle in them.' Such was the song. But from whom and where? It is said to have been a loud voice in heaven. And adopting the meaning attached to the word heaven in the unsymbolic parts of Scripture, it has been explained by some interpreters as proceeding from the departed spirits of the just; by others, as from the angels of heaven. It seems, however, more natural to construe the term of the same symbolic heaven of political authority and power, so frequently referred to in the apocalytic figurations; more especially from its having been spoken of just but a little before, as the seal coincidently of the woman and the dragon, and scene of the war that had ended in the dragon's dejec-In which case, the song of triumph would represent that of the christian body then living, and elevated by the recent events to supremacy in the Roman empire; the expression 'our brethren' used in it, in reference to the saints that had previously suffered martyrdom for Christ, confirms this

view of the matter. For had angels been the chaunters of it, they would scarcely have called the saints brethren, seeing that they had not united with them by the brotherhood of the same flesh and blood; but rather fellow servants of Christ, as elsewhere in the Apocalypse (chap. xxii. 9). Again, had it been the song of the departed spirits of the just, they would rather have spoken in the first person, not the third, and said, 'our accuser,' not the accuser of 'our brethren;' 'we overcame him,' not 'they,' seeing that the martyr-victors spoken of had already become constituents of their happy number. Thus, on the whole, we may, I think, unhesitatingly conclude on this song in heaven prefiguring some similar song of the Christians of the Roman world, on occasion of their triumph and exaltation under Constantine over paganism and the pagans. It only remains to show its fulfilment in the records of history.

"And this, indeed, presents itself almost ready drawn out to our hands, in the

graphic descriptions of the cotemporary historian Eusebius: he relates, how by Emperor, as well as by Christian ministers and people, their deliverance and victory over the heathen potentates was recognized as the result of the Divine interposition, and manifestation of the Divine power; how Constantine professed himself to be in his imperial office only the imitator and servant of the King of kings, and so the kingdom administered by him, with Christ? ianity dominant in it, seemed to be the very kingdom of God and his Christ foretold by the prophets. Was not all this the exact echo of the prefigurative voice heard in the vision, saying, 'Now hath come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ?' He tells us, further, how, in the retrospect of the past persecution, though conducted by earthly pagan princes, and on the accusation of earthly adversaries, they recognized the instigations and secret actings of their invisible enemy, the accuser of the brethren,

the old serpent the devil; and again, in the casting down of these pagans, the casting down of the devil: first, according to the next apocalyptic clause:-- 'The accuser of our brethren hath been cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.' He relates how, at the same time, there was solemn remembrance of the martyrs and confessors that had illustrated the past persecution, and praise and honour rendered them; how of those that had suffered unto death public notice was taken, as of heroes that had conquered, specially by the doctrine of the cross, in the most excellent combat of witnessing, and martyrdom, and by the word of their witnessing (μαρτορία), 'and they loved not their lives,' i.e., they were profligate of them, 'even unto death:' and how, as a further tribute to their innocence and worth, the property confiscated from them was reclaimed and restored to their surviving relatives, or to the church.

"History of the woman (the church) after the dragon's dejection.—Apocalypse xii. 12—17.

"'Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea; for the devil is come down to you in great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.'

"First. We have here the dejected dragon's persecution of the woman, 'And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.'

"It is of course implied in what follows, that the woman no more appeared in heaven, but on earth. But how such a change? and how might the dragon find means to persecute her, when himself cast down to the ground, especially after her children had been made the subject of an ethilition, and called on to rejoice and triumph? The fact, however, proved as prefigured. The very next point which Eusebius describes,—next, I mean, after the Christians' congratulatory songs and rejoicings, consequent on Licinius'

overthrow and the establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, is a tale of her distress and persecution.

"In order, however, to the right understanding of the gist and point of the prophecy, it is essential to mark how in singularly distinctive phrase it characterizes the woman, meant as her who brought forth the man child. It was evidently the true primitive orthodox church, which was the object of this persecution, the same that had accomplished the victory over paganism; especially, as holding and dying for the testimony, referred to in the apocalyptic song of victory, of a divine atoning Saviour, the Lamb that took away the sins of the Indeed, there might also seem world in the words an allusive contrast to some anti-primitive church or churches then to arise. If so, they would not be the churches to suffer from the dragon, rather, they might be the dragon's instruments and co-operators. I observe this, because, though there may be a partial allusion, in what is said, to the

dragon's persecuting the woman, to the bitter mockings of Christians by the pagans remaining in the Roman empire: mockings like as of Isaac by Ishmael: and when opportunity might offer, their opposition and even violence, also, to the savage persecutions of Christians by heathen princes without the empire. Yet, I conceive, in common with other commentators, that, first, his direct assault on the very vitals of Christianity, and persecution of orthodox and true Christians by Arianism and the Arians, next, and connectedly, his indirect, but not less hostile attack on them through temptations to superstition, are the things here mainly prefigured.

"It was at Alexandria that the spark was kindled, which was to spread into so wide a conflagration. The presbyter, Arius, threw out insinuations against the divinity of the Lord Jesus: a view which, like all that has since been called Socinianism, at once impeached his omnipotence to save, and the perfectness of his propitiatory sacrifice as

the spotless all-atoning Lamb of God. Was not the prompting spirit, that spirit of philosophy and vain deceit, against which the apostle Paul had lifted up his forewarning voice (Col. ii. 8, 9), that, too, which earlier made the Jews cry 'blasphemy' against Jesus, when calling himself the Son of God? Excommunicated by his Bishop, the question became one forthwith of discussion and strife in every part of Roman Christendom. Constantine assembled the Council of Nice to decide the question—the first general council of the Christian church; by it Arianism was condemned, the true Deity of Jesus asserted, and orthodoxy and truth retained thus far in the ascendant. after a few years, Constantinus succeeded to Constantine in the empire; an avowed devoted Arian. Then was Athanasius, the champion of the true faith, chased from his See of Alexandria, and persecutions began against those who, like him, maintained the primitive orthodox faith, almost throughout the empire. For forty years or more the

persecution more or less prevailed, through the reign of Valens as well as Constantinus; and did not the spirit of paganism manifest his participation in it? 'The pagans took courage,' says Milner, 'and assisted the heretics in the persecution,' saying, 'The Arians have embraced our religion; again, he adds, on another occasion, 'Zealous heretics were by force of arms intruded into the places of the exiled trinitarians: and arianism seemed well nigh to have avenged the cause of fallen idolatry.' The real though invisible originator of the heresy and persecution, noted in this vision, was early recognized by the Christians. 'It was some evil demon,' says Eusebius, 'that wrought this mischief, envious of the prosperity and happiness of the church.'

"Second. We are next told of the woman's flight into the wilderness, and the help given her towards it:—'And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness into her place, from the face of the Serpent,

where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time."

I will only here add, the first consideration suggested by Mr. Elliott: viz.,

THE WOMAN'S FLIGHT TOWARDS THE WILDERNESS.

"It has been a question among commentators, whether by the woman's flight into the wilderness there be meant a change of state or a change of place. Vitringa argues against Mede for the former signification, as that which is necessarily required by the attribution of movement to the woman in the very terms of the figure; but, as it seems to me, quite in vain. There is implied movement from one local point to another, in what was represented just previously of the Dragon being cast down from heaven to the earth: yet Vitringa, in common with most other expositors, explains this as a change of state in the Roman empire, viz., from political supremacy and establishment to political degradation. The same we may presume is the case here. And what then is the state indicated by the figure of the

woman or church, i. e., Christ's true Church (for we must never lose sight of the distinction), being in the wilderness? the figure itself, and the type also that is evidently referred to of the sojourning of the ancient Israel in the wilderness, simply insulation from the rest of the world, invisibility, and destitution of all ordinary means of spiritual sustenance (I say spiritual, because the person symbolized is the church) a destitution such as to need God's special interposition to support life. Such are the conditions of the completed wilderness state. Of course in proportion as the church might approximate to it, they must be supposed to have had a partial and approximate fulfilment: and as, in the chapter before us, the woman is described as transferred into the wilderness, not suddenly but gradually, her first movement thitherward being represented as begun soon after the birth of the man child; for it is then that the first mention is made of her fleeing a wanderer towards the wilderness, and her settlement

therein as not completed until after the dragon's dejection; the dejected dragon's persecution of the woman, the two wings of the great eagle being given her, the dragon's casting water out of his mouth to overwhelm her, and the earth absorbing, or at least beginning to absorb the flood of waters; such I say being the representation of her long and not yet completed flight into the wilderness state, it is her earlier movement and progress thitherward that now alone claims our attention.

"In proof then that Christ's spiritual church, 'the blessed company of all faithful people,' once discernible almost as a body corporate before the world in the general holy evangelical character of the members, doctrine, and worship of the professing church, began from soon after the establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire, and through all the half century following, to flee towards the wilderness, in other words, to vanish rapidly in its distinctive features from public view, become more insulated

and desolate, and more and more straitened for spiritual sustenance in the then public means of grace—I have only to make appeal to the testimony of the most respectable ecclesiastical historians. The period in question is the same, it will be observed, that was before depicted in the two parallel visions of the segregation of the sealed from the unsealed, and of those that adhered to Christ as their Mediator and Atoner, from the apostatized multitudes of the professing Israel."

The following I therefore subjoin from Milner and Mosheim; the former thus describes the state of religion even where Arianism prevailed not, after Constantine's establishment of Christianity, and for the half-century following. "In the general appearance of the Church we cannot see much of the spirit of godliness. External piety flourished, but faith, love, heavenly-mindedness appear very rare. The doctrine of real conversion was very much lost, and external baptism placed in its stead:

and the true doctrine of Justification by faith, and the true practical use of a crucified Saviour for troubled consciences, scarce to be seen at this time. Superstition and selfrighteousness were making vigorous shoots; and the real gospel of Christ was hidden from the men that professed it." afterwards refers to the Council of Antioch held about the year 370 in Valens' reign; in which the one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty Bishops that attended, pathetically bewailed the times, and observed, that the Infidel laughed at the evil: while the Christians (he meant orthodox Christians) avoiding the churches as now nurseries of impiety, went into the deserts, and lifted up their hands to God with sighs and tears. He elswhere instances the piety of the monk Antony, to show that "godliness in those times lived obscure in hermitages; though abroad in the world the gospel was almost buried in faction and ambition:" and at the same time, as if in proof that the true church had not yet quite left the world for

the wilderness, speaks of "godliness also thriving in some unknown instances in ordinary life," and refers to Ammiarius Marcellinus, an unbeliever little disposed to speak too favourably of Christians, as showing that "among the lower orders, and in obscure places exemplary pastors and real religion were not wanting."

To the same effect is the report of Mosheim: of the life and morals of the professing Christians of the fourth century he says, "Good men were as before, mixed with bad: but the bad were by degrees so multiplied that men truly holy and devoted to God appeared more rarely; and the pious few were almost oppressed by the vicious multitude." Of the doctrine he says, "Fictions of early origin,-about saint veneration and relics, a purifying fire, celibacy, &c., now so prevailed, as in course of time almost to thrust true religion aside or at least to exceedingly obscure and tarnish it." Adding with reference to the conduct of controversies on doctrinal points.

that "the ancient Christian simplicity had almost fled away from them." And as to Scripture interpretation, that the mystical and allegorizing method of Origen was followed.

His account of the public worship, as then celebrated is to the effect that to the hymns, prayers, Scripture reading, sermons, and ministration of the Lord's Supper, which had been handed down from primitive times, there were now added various rites and ceremonies, more suited to please the eye than to kindle piety; that besides this, the prayers had greatly fallen, away from their ancient simplicity and majesty; that the sermons were fashioned rather to excite popular admiration and applause than to edify; and that a mystery and reserve was maintained toward Catechumens and the mixed audience on the subject of the holy Sacrament; i.e. on a subject involving the vital doctrine of the atonement. He elsewhere contrasts the zeal of the emperors to exalt the Christian religion,

and of the priesthood to obscure and smother it by superstitious rites and ceremonies.

Such are the consenting testimonies of these two ecclesiastical historians, to the lamentable state of Christ's true Church and religion, through the middle half of the fourth century, even when not oppressed by the deadly Arian heresies. And, I ask, can any description more precisely answer to the significant figuration, now under discussion, of the Apocalyptic prophecy? Its spirit scarce to be seen, its living exemplars (those that constituted its body) rare, the gospel faith which was a part of its very essence, almost hidden,—the real Church of Christ was, evidently, according to these accounts, receding into the invisibility of the wilderness state. And, as the doctrine taught throughout professed Christendom around it, was corrupted and vitiated by superstitious fictions, the vital dogmas of conversion and justification misrepresented, the public prayers of the Church assemblies deprived very much of their primitive

spirituality, a deep reserve maintained by the preachers on God's great mystery of atonement and redemption, and a false method followed of scripture interpretation, forasmuch as the public and visible means of grace were thus vitiated, and rendered unnutritious, is it not equally evident that Christ's Church and people, were reduced more and more to the wilderness state of spiritual want and barrenness? It has been observed, that some Christians, like Antony, under a sense of the wretched and ungenial atmosphere of professing Christendom, fulfilled the apocalyptic figure to the letter, and sought in the Syrian or Egyptian deserts the spiritual comforts, nourishment, and peace, that failed elsewhere. But it was only to find after brief experience, that removal from the world's contentions and bustle, is not necessarily removal from its corruptions. Superstition and error insinuated themselves as effectively, ere the end of the fourth century, into the monasteries as into the churches

of Christendom. Much more was this the case afterwards. So that at length there, as elsewhere, whatever of Christ's true Church was preserved, was preserved by God's special and extraordinary interposition; even as Israel or Elijah in the The Church, though advanwilderness. cing towards the wilderness state, had not yet fully attained it, its features were in the fourth century discernible, though faintly; food was still supplied it, though scantily, and, ere its complete entrance into the wilderness, a partial success was ordained for it. The help of the great eagle's wings, as powerful as seasonable, was to be given to the woman, to bear her up triumphant, from the first direct attack on her vitality by the fallen dragon, and borne up by them, she was yet once again to exhibit herself in not a little of her primitive distinctness of feature and lustre, before she finally disappeared from public view in Christendom, and was seen no more.



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